

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of inhibiting growth of cancer cells in a patient, comprising: administering to said patient an effective amount of an antagonist of STAT₃ (signal transducer and activator of transcription) signaling,

wherein said antagonist antagonizes STAT₃ homodimer DNA binding; and

wherein said antagonist noncovalently binds to a STAT₃ polypeptide; and

wherein said antagonist is a peptide having a length of 3 to 12 amino acids comprising

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SEQ ID NO: 34, SEQ ID NO: 35, SEQ ID NO: 36, SEQ ID NO: 37, or SEQ ID NO: 38.

2. – 18. (cancelled).

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said antagonist of STAT₃ homodimer DNA binding disrupts SH2-pY interactions between the SH2 domain of one STAT₃ polypeptide monomer and a pY on another STAT₃ polypeptide monomer.

20. – 21. (cancelled).

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein said antagonist of STAT₃ DNA binding is a peptide that binds to full-length STAT₃.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein said antagonist of STAT3 DNA binding is a peptide that binds the SH2 domain of STAT3.

24. – 32. (cancelled).

33. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said STAT3 polypeptide is monomeric.

34. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said STAT3 polypeptide is dimeric.